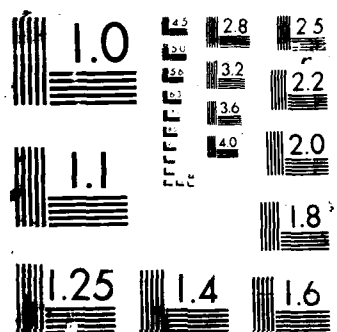


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In vivo and in vitro studies of intracochlear electrical potential gradients. W.E. Brownell (Depts. of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery and Neuroscience, JHU, Baltimore, MD)

19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

A unique division of labor exists within the mammalian cochlea where electrochemical energy generated by one organ (the stria vascularis) is used by cells in another organ (the organ of Corti). Specifically, outer hair cells carry out bi-directional transduction (mechano-electrical and electro-mechanical) utilizing the energy of the endocochlear potential. We have measured intracochlear potential gradients in vivo to examine the fine structure of cochlear ionic currents both in silence and in response to acoustic stimulation [Brownell, W.E., Manis, P.B., & Zidanic, M., J. Acoust Soc. Am., 74:792-800 (1983); Brownell, W.E. Zidanic, M., & Spirou, G.A., Neurobiology of Hearing: The Cochlear, R.A. Altschuler, et al. (Eds), Raven Press, 91-107 (1986).] The spatial profiles of potential gradient magnitude (as large as 20 mV/mm) and direction are compatible with a flow of cations (largely potassium) in a local circuit that is driven by an ionic pump in stria vascularis. The standing current (the "silent current") is large and can be measured in all three chambers of the mammalian inner ear. Mechano-electrical transduction by the hair cells in the organ

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PROGRESS REPORT ON CONTRACT N00014-87-K-0037

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: William E. Brownell, Ph.D.

CONTRACTOR: The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

CONTRACT TITLE: Cochlear Hair Cell Electrochemistry: Mechanisms for Bidirectional Transduction

START DATE: 1 January 1987

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: To determine the cellular mechanism responsible for outer hair cell (OHC) electromotility. Our working hypothesis is that the electrically evoked movements of OHCs result from electro-osmotic movement of cytoplasm in the cell's laminated cisternal system. More specifically, we postulate that intracochlear potential gradients associated with acoustic transduction drive intracellular fluids through an electro-osmotic "pump" formed by the plasma membrane and the morphologically unique laminated cisternal membranes.

PROGRESS since 1-January-1988

1. MEASURING AXIAL POTENTIAL GRADIENTS IN OHC: Our working hypothesis requires that axial potential gradients exist in the outer hair cells. We are measuring the cable properties of the outer hair cell to determine if potential gradients of sufficient magnitude can be maintained by the cell. A command voltage is presented with the electrode amplifier in voltage clamp to a tight seal whole cell electrode (electrode 1) attached near either the synaptic or stereociliar end of the cell. The current required to follow the command voltage is monitored and the series resistance of the electrode is calculated from the spectral impedance function or from hyperpolarizing step responses. A second whole cell electrode (electrode 2) is attached near the opposite end of the cell and the voltage measured at this location is compared to the series resistance corrected command voltage. Results from these experiments are presented in figures 1-3.

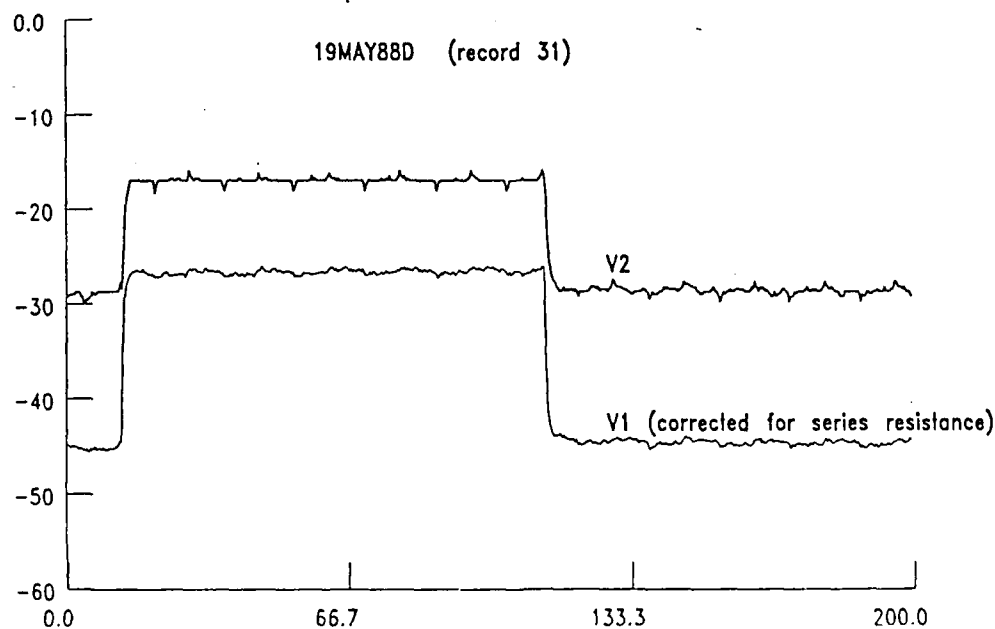


Figure 1

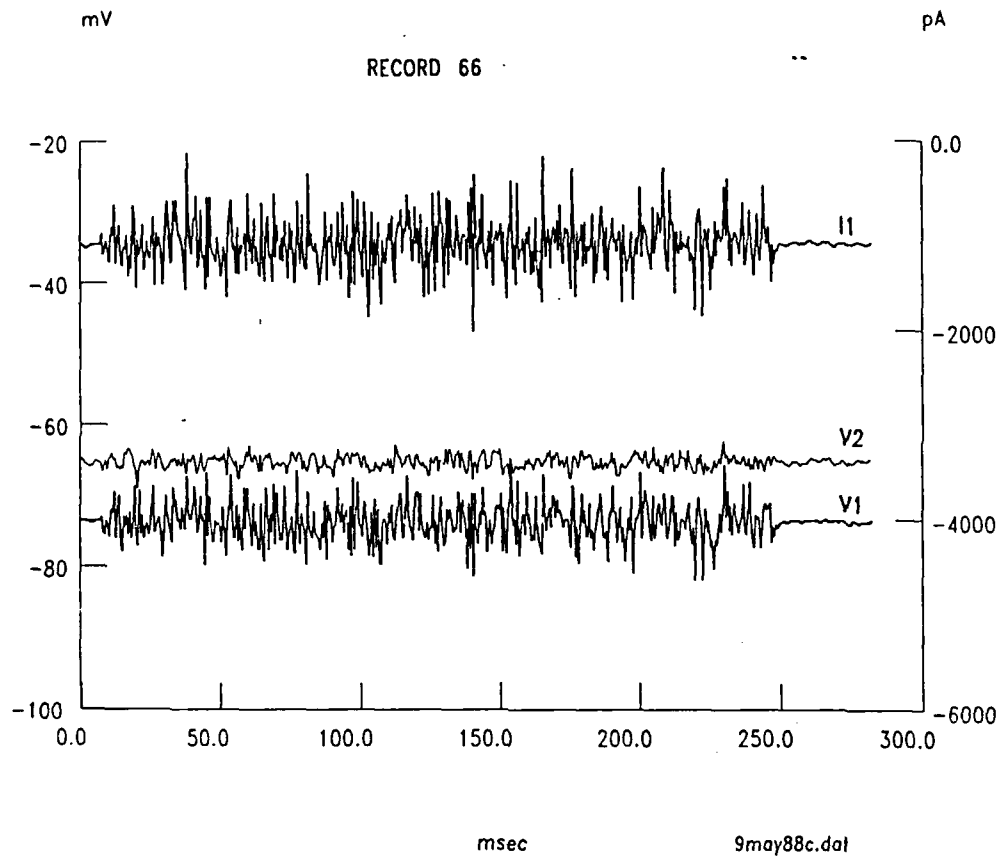


Figure 2

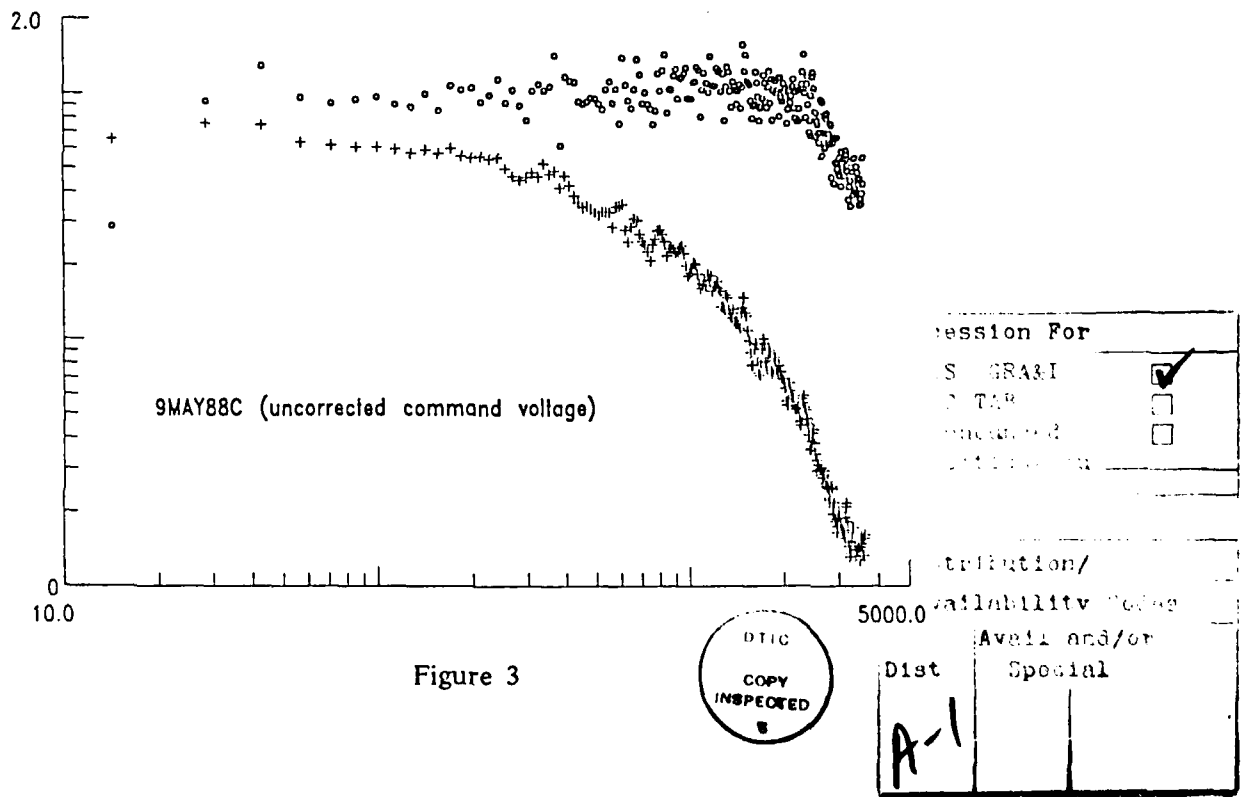


Figure 3

Figure 1 shows a voltage decrement over the 30 μm distance between electrode 1 (V1) and electrode 2 (V2).

Figure 2 shows a single presentation of a white noise command voltage in the bottom trace and the voltage measured 25 μm away is shown in the middle trace. The current required to produce the command voltage is presented in the top trace. Comparison of the voltage traces shows a voltage decrement that is greater for the higher frequency components of the signal.

The spectral composition of the command voltage (electrode 1) and the remotely recorded voltage (electrode 2) are shown in the top and bottom plots (respectively) in Figure 3. The voltage decrement and low pass filtering we observe is consistent with the existence of cable properties but we can not yet state unequivocally whether the behavior results from true passive cable properties or the possibility that the whole cell electrodes introduce significant error in the form of poor seals to the plasma membrane. Recordings made with our tightest seals have produced paradoxical negative voltage decrements.

2. POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF POLYAMINES IN HAIR CELL TRANSDUCTION: The anti-neoplastic drug, difluoromethylornithine (DFMO), has caused reversible sensori-neural hearing loss in clinical tests on humans. DFMO is a specific blocker of the enzyme ornithine decarboxylase and blocks the production of polyamines. We have developed a guinea pig animal model that mimics the reversible hearing loss seen in humans. Over 25 animals have been processed since the last report. Morphological studies confirm the involvement of the laminated cisternal system in the hearing loss measured with brainstem evoked response. The highly polycationic nature of the polyamines suggest their possible involvement in electrokinetic phenomena.

3. FABRICATION OF NEW PHOTOMETRIC AMPLIFIER: We have designed and begun fabrication of a new photometric amplifier after finding deficiencies in our initial design. The image of electrically stimulated outer hair cells is projected out of the microscope onto a linear position detector. The detector's output is differentially amplified and either signal averaged or fed into a lock-in analyzer prior to signal averaging. This configuration permits the measurement of high frequency, low displacement movements of hair cells. We have used the old amplifier to make preliminary measures of the effect of temperature change on the movements (see work plan) and observed only small differences with temperature change. Software development has begun for computer control of the lock-in analyzer so that data collection may be automated.

4. OBSERVATION OF A NEW TYPE OF ELECTRICALLY INDUCED SHAPE CHANGE: We have become aware of a another type of electrically induced outer hair cell shape change over the last six months. Depolarization leads to the loss of fluid from the cell and hyperpolarization leads to an increase in cell volume. It requires several minutes to manifest itself and is most conspicuous when the holding potential is moved more than 50 mV to either side of the resting membrane potential. The previously described, high frequency movements, in contrast, appear to occur with little or no change in cell volume. High frequency movements eventually disappear as the cells lose their turgor during depolarization and reappear after several minutes of moving the holding potential to a hyperpolarizing value. The mechanism responsible for the slow, reversible, electrically induced shape change and its significance for cochlear transduction have yet to be established.

5. MORPHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF MEMBRANE SURFACE CHARGE: We have previously observed that the lectin FITC-HPA binds intracellularly in the outer hair cell suggesting that glycoconjugates with terminal N-acetyl-D-galactosamine residues exist inside the plasma membrane. If the intracellular binding of HPA indicates a strongly polyanionic surface

charge on the membranes of the intercisternal spaces, the resulting surface potential could increase the magnitude of the electrokinetic events postulated to be associated with OHC electro-motility. Our initial observation was based on the binding of HPA lectin purified by a French biological supply firm and we were unable to demonstrate the binding with the American firm SIGMA's HPA lectin. We have recently determined that this was due to the fixative used and now obtain identical result with the SIGMA product. SIGMA also has HPA bound with colloidal gold and the enzyme horseradish peroxidase which produce electron opaque products at the binding site. We should now be able to determine the intracellular locus of the glycoconjugate to which HPA is binding.

WORK PLAN:

1. MICROPHOTOMETRICALLY CHARACTERIZE THE DYNAMICS OF OHC CELL SHAPE CHANGES in response to step, pulse and sinusoidal electric stimulation. By measuring the movement magnitude and phase we will establish mechanical frequency response properties. These experiments will establish normative data with which to compare experimental results. Our newly implemented white noise analysis paradigm will permit the rapid collection of data. Potential gradient measures will be extended in order to provide as complete a description of the gradient driving the hypothesized electrokinetic response. Our ability to place two whole cell electrodes on the cell permits the maintenance of controlled potential gradients within the cell. An alternative hypothesis for the motile mechanism is based on a postulated protein with piezoelectric like properties that is sensitive to the transmembrane potential. The null hypothesis for this possibility is that the movements occur under conditions in which there is no change in the net transmembrane potential. We can introduce voltage steps that are equal in magnitude but of opposite polarity at the two ends of the cell. If no movements occur it supports a transmembrane dependence, alternatively, their presence must be a function of the applied potential gradient in order to support our working hypothesis in which the movements are a function of an axial potential gradient.

2. MEASURE THE EFFECT ON OHC ELECTROMOTILITY OF MANIPULATIONS THAT CAN AFFECT ELECTRO-OSMOSIS: Manipulations include administration of substances capable of modifying the cell surface charge and parametrically varying the ionic composition of the bathing media. We will use aminoglycosides, polyamines and test hair cells taken from DMFO treated animals. The recently observed slow change in fluid volume that follows changes in the holding potential will also be used. The observed loss in rapid electromotility with a loss in cell turgor suggests that a motile mechanism requires a modest hydrostatic pressure in the cell.

Changes in temperature should produce a change in OHC dynamics. The equation describing the velocity of movement in electro-osmosis is:

$$\vec{v} = \frac{\vec{E}\epsilon\zeta}{4\pi\eta}$$

where \vec{v} is the velocity of fluid flow
 \vec{E} is the potential gradient
 ϵ is the dielectric constant of the medium
 ζ is the zeta potential
 η is the viscosity of the moving fluid.

The equation describes electro-osmotically driven fluid velocity as being inversely proportional to viscosity. For a liquid, viscosity is roughly related to temperature by:

$$\eta = Ae^{\frac{\beta}{T}} ; \quad \text{so that electro-osmotic fluid velocity is:} \quad \vec{v} \propto \left[Ae^{\frac{\beta}{T}} \right]^{-1}$$

This relationship is postulated to describe the flow of cytoplasm between the membranes of the laminated cisternae in response to a potential gradient, which, in turn, may drive pressure changes within the cell, generating the conformational changes we detect as movement. While the above equation does not describe the velocity of the cell movement we will record, changes in electro-osmotic flow caused by temperature should elicit proportional changes in movement if other variables remain constant. Experimental data collected on the temperature dependence of muscle contraction have shown about a six fold change in contraction velocity over the same temperature range we will be using in our protocol. Expected electro-osmotic velocity changes should be about two fold over the same range. A measurable difference in the velocity of movement will prove a valuable test of our working hypothesis.

3. DETERMINE THE CELLULAR LOCALIZATION OF HPA LECTIN BINDING. HPA lectin, colloiddally bound with gold or horseradish peroxidase will be used to determine where the HPA lectin binds within the cell using transmission electro-microscopic techniques. This work will be done in collaboration with Drs. Pablo Gil-Loyzaga (Madrid) and Peter Santi (Associate Professor, U. Minnesota).

INVENTIONS: None. No potentially patentable devices.

PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS:

1. A manuscript authored by Gil-Loyzaga, P.E., and Brownell, W.F., entitled "Wheat germ agglutinin and Helix Pomatia lectin binding on cochlear hair cells" is in press in Hearing Research

2. An abstract authored by Jansen, C.J., Mattox, D.E., Miller, K.D., and Brownell, W.E., entitled "An animal model of hearing loss from alpha-difluoromethylornithine (DFMO)," was published in the Abstracts of the Midwinter Research Meeting of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology 11 (1988) 257.

3. An abstract authored by Zidanic, M., and Brownell, W.E., entitled "Two-dimensional analysis of cochlear microphonics in the guinea pig cochlea," was published in the Abstracts of the Midwinter Research Meeting of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology 11 (1988) 169.

4. An abstract authored by Brownell, W.E., entitled "*In vivo* and *in vitro* studies of intracoclear electrical potential gradient," will be published J. Acoust. Soc. Am. as part of a special symposium on Hair Cell Transduction and Cochlear Frequency Analysis.

5. An invited lecture entitled, "Outer hair cell response properties and the mechanism for electro-motility" was presented by W. Brownell as part of an international symposium entitled "Current Concepts of Hair Cell Function" held in Ann Arbor, Michigan between June 11-15, 1988.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES: An undergraduate, graduate, post-doctoral fellow and three Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery residents have participated in portions of the research.

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